

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 IO-13 HA-05 /116 W  
-----072626 181514Z /50

P R 181415Z JUL 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1093  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
COMIDEASTFOR  
USCINCEUR  
CINCUSNAVEUR  
CINCPAC  
CINCPACFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 1049

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2  
TAGS: MOPS, MILI, PBOR, DJ, ET  
SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN FIRST DIVISION OPERATIONS ALONG DJIBOUTI FRONTIER

REF: DJIBOUTI 954

SUMMARY--THE ETHIOPIAN FIRST DIVISION, BELIEVED HEAVILY REIN-  
FORCED WITH MILITIA UNITS, IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN INTENSIVE  
SEARCH AND DESTROY EFFORTS DIRECTS AT ALI MIRAH GROUPS ALONG  
DSSBOUTI FRONTIER. PRIMARY TACTIC APPEARS TO BE DIRECTED AT  
PUSHING ALI MIRAH FORCES AWAY FROM THE SAFETY OF THE DJIBOUTI  
BORDER TOWARD THE AWASH VALLEY. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE  
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DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT IS COOPERATING WITH THE ETHIOPIANS IN THIS  
CAMPAIGN.

1. AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF COMPARATIVELY BENIGN ATTITUDE TOWARD  
ACTIVITIES SUPPORTERS OF DEPOSED SULTAN ALI MIRAH WHO HAVE  
OPERATED IN AND OUT OF DJIBOUTI TERRITORY WHILE HARASSING  
ETHIOPIAN CONVOYS ON THE ASSAB-ADDIS ASMARA ROAD, THE ETHIOPIAN

ARMY NOW MAKING DETERMINED EFFORT ELIMINATE PROBLEM. FOR THE PAST FIVE OR SIX DAYS, FRENCH AND DJIBOUTI INTELLIGENCE SOURCES HAVE REPORTED HEAVY MILITARY ACTIVITY ALONG THE WESTERN AND NORTHERN FRONTIERS OF DJIBOUTI REPUBLIC AS ETHIOPIAN ARMY TROOPS AND MILITIA HAVE ATTACKED ALI MIRAH PARTISAN BASES. THE MOST INTENSIVE ACTIVITY IS IN THE AREA NORTH OF LAKE ABBE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT PARATROOP FORCES WERE USED TO INTERDICT ACCESS TO SAFETY OF DJIBOUTI TERRITORY. RECENT DELIVERIES OF SOMALI ARMS TO ALI MIRAH GROUPS MAY HAVE PROVOKED WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SHOWDOWN WITH DISSIDENT AFARS.

2. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT ETHIOPIAN ARMY ACTIONS AGAINST ALI MIRAH MAY HAVE ACTIVE COOPERATION DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT. EXCHANGES OF MESSAGES BETWEEN GROD AND ITS MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION IN NORTHERN AREA IN FOOTHILLS OF MOUNT MOUSSI ALI INDICATE HIGH LEVEL OF COORDINATION. ACCORDING FRENCH SOURCES, "MYSTERIOUS" REQUEST MADE RECENTLY BY DJIBOUTI ASKING REMOVAL OF NOMADS IN BORDER AREA JUST NORTH OF FRONTIER POST AT BOUYA (42°22"E, 12°23"N). REPORTEDLY THERE IS ALI MIRAH FORCE ARMS CACHE IN THIS VICINITY. IT APPEARS THAT DJIBOUTI FRONTIER GUARD FORCE (GROUPEMENT NOMADE AUTONOME-GNA) HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED LOOK ANOTHER WAY IF THIS ARMS CACHE SEIZED BY ETHIOPIAN MILITARY UNITS OPERATING IN ZONE NORTH OF FRONTIER. SEEMING DJIBOUTI ACQUIESCENCE IN BORDER INCURSION APPEARS LITTLE TROUBLING TO

FRENCH WHO ARE CHARGED WITH PROTECTION THESE SAME FRONTIERS.  
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3. THERE HAS BEEN ALREADY SOME LOCAL AFAR REACTIONS TO DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT POSITION OF APPARENT EQUANIMITY IN FACE OF ETHIOPIAN PRESSURES ON ALI MIRAH. HOWEVER, THESE REACTIONS APPEAR STRONGEST AMONG AFAR TRADITIONAL LEADERS, AND THE OVERWHELMING MASS OF AFARS (IF ONE CAN USE SUCH A TERM IN REFERRING TO FIERCELY INDEPENDENT LARGELY NOMADIC POPULATION) APPEAR DISINTERESTED.

4. COMMENT--CHARGE HAS DISCUSSED MATTER OF DJIBOUTI AFAR IDENTIFICATION WITH ALI MIRAH WITH DJIBOUTI AFARS AND ISSAS AS WELL AS FRENCH EXPERTS. EVERYONE APPEARS TO AGREE THAT TOTAL PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL AFARS LIKELY TO SUPPORT ALI MIRAH VARIES BETWEEN FIVE AND TEN PERCENT. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE DJIBOUTI GOVERNMENT MAY FEEL QUITE SAFE IN QUIETLY SUPPORTING ETHIOPIAN

MILITARY EFFORTS. HOWEVER, AS WE HAVE FOUND IN RECENT PAST, SULTAN ALI MIRAH DOES HAVE STRONG SUPPORT IN JIDDA IN PERSON OF PRINCE FAHD. AS DJIBOUTI'S MOST FAITHFUL SUPPORT IN ARAB WORLD, THE SAUDI REACTION TO THE APPARENT DJIBOUTI SELL-OUT OF THE DEPOSED SULTAN IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014